

SAN MARCOS FREE PRESS.

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SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

TEXAS TOPICS.

—Upward of three hundred silver dollars in counterfeit money have been discovered to be in circulation in the city of Danison.

—The Southern hotel, four business houses, part of a lumber yard, several brigades of cockroaches, and a whole regiment of bed-bugs were destroyed by fire at Gainesville recently.

—*Hamilton Herald*: Mr. T. D. Neel, living in the Leon valley in this county, near Snowville, brought us a sample of Havana tobacco raised by himself. We have shown it to several who are judges of leaf tobacco and they pronounce it excellent. Mr. Neel will plant much more extensively next year. He had no trouble in raising plants, which is considered the most difficult part of the business.

—There are in Waco fourteen church edifices, many of them costly. The Baptist church cost \$30,000; M. E. church, South, \$28,000; Episcopalian, \$13,000; Presbyterian, \$8,000; Cumberland, \$7,000; Christian, \$6,000. The remaining seven are Catholic, German Methodist, East Waco Baptist, white congregations whose buildings cost on an average \$3,000. The other four are colored churches, costing on an average \$2,000.

—The International & Great Northern Railroad Company have prepared for exhibition at the Cotton exposition at Atlanta, a sample of Texas products, which will surpass anything heretofore attempted in that line. It will include cereals of all varieties and samples of soil where raised, cotton in all conditions of culture, wool and woolen goods from New Braunfels, stone and mineral ore and marble, from every section of the country along the line of the International will be represented. The fruit region will have a display on samples such as have been raised at various fruit farms, bales of cotton sampled from different portions of the country through which the road runs, corn and other cereals. General Manager Hoxie has taken deep interest in the matter, and no effort nor expense will be spared to make it a creditable and worthy display.

—*Chicago Times*: Hon. Eli Stilson, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, who has a hundred-thousand-acre sheep ranch in Western Texas, lately visited this office and communicated much valuable information respecting the wool interest in that region. He states that some of the largest and best flocks of merino sheep in California are about to be moved to Texas. The reasons that prompted this change of pastures are various. Land suitable for sheep-raising is becoming scarce and high in California. The water supply in many places is scant and unreliable. The market for wool is not as good as in Texas. San Antonio is now one of the largest and best markets for wool in the world. Drouths are much less severe in Texas than in California, and the climate is generally better. The wool produced from the same kind of sheep is better in Texas than in California. In the former State it is soft, silky and of uniform character the entire length of the fiber. It is ordinarily entirely free from weak places that are caused by long-continued, severe storms, and a scarcity of food and water. In California the staple is not uniform. The wool that grows during the rainy season is strong and of good quality, but that grown during the dry period of the year is not strong, and is deficient of good qualities. If sheep carry their fleece the entire year it will contain two qualities of wool in the same specimen, and it can not be employed to manufacture a uniform thread. The sheep are accordingly shorn twice a year, and two fleeces of short wool of very different qualities are obtained. Both sorts of wool may go into the same cloth, but if this is the case the stronger is used to form the warp and the weaker the filling.

—The shipments of fresh beef from Texas to the eastern cities, already slaughtered, dressed and ready for the market stalls, must, in the near future, grow to be an immense enterprise and business. We have the beeves, and taking them fresh from their rich mesquite pastures or the fattening stalls where they are corn fed, the meat will be more than a hundred per cent. sweeter, juicier and healthier than when shipped to these markets by rail and slaughtered there, all feverish from their confinement, excitement and abstinence from water and food on the journey. All that is necessary is refrigerator cars, and of the practicability of these cars the *Boston Journal* says: "In Quincy Market yesterday, dealers in fresh meats were examining with a good deal of interest samples of dressed beef which were brought from Chicago in a Tiffany refrigerator car in six days. The beef was as fresh and bright as if it had been brought from Brighton, and the market men pronounced it as desirable in every respect. Chicago dressed beef has been coming to this market for several years past, but there has always been a prejudice against it, as facilities for bringing it here in strictly prime order during the

hot weather were not satisfactory. But it seems that all the difficulties have been overcome and that beef killed in Chicago can be laid down here in six or seven days in perfect condition. This is a matter of some importance to the public for if fresh beef can be brought here from the west, and delivered to the consumers in as good order as the beef killed in this vicinity, it must lower the price, as the cost of bringing it here will be much lower than on live cattle. This car load was shipped when the temperature outside was at 80, and brought here over the National Dispatch line on a Tiffany car, whose temperature was from 40 to 44." —*Dallas Herald*.

Death of an Old Printer in Texas.

A few weeks ago, an old and feeble man stepped into the *Express* office and asked for work, saying he was a printer. He secured sufficient labor, "subbing" for the regularly employed type setters, to earn a living, and worked pretty steadily until last week, when he was taken suddenly ill and died. His fellow craftsmen attended his remains to their long home. A trunk was left by the old man, which was brought to this office, and on being opened yesterday it was found to contain a large amount of manuscripts and various literary productions of the deceased. Also a neat little box, which was opened, and within which was found a badge of the national association of veterans, and also a beautiful and very large silver medal, bearing upon one side the words: "Presented by the city of New York to Edward Schiller, Company D, New York Regiment of Volunteers in Mexico." On the other side, "Cerro Gordo, Chapultepec, Vera Cruz, Chertusco." These are the points at which four of the greatest battles of the Mexican war were fought, and in which Edward Schiller had honored himself as a member of the New York regiment.

There were also in the box with the medals numerous clippings from the newspapers of the country highly complimenting Edward Schiller for a work on moral philosophy, which he produced while at Fort Scott, Kansas. The criticisms upon the work, which was the first book ever published in Kansas, indicated that it was a well and thoughtfully written and an instructive work. And not until the old man died did it become known that he had been a man of prominence in his day. He is supposed to have been a descendant from a great German family of his name. When he died there was no one present who knew of his family or friends abroad. He went away as he came—quietly—without any tale to unfold. —*San Antonio Express*.

For some time during the war the subject of the foregoing sketch was employed on the *Picayune* as a reporter and special writer. He wrote a number of sketches over the signature of "Peppercorn." While here he appeared to be a man of considerable means. He, or his wife, owned a river boat, which was sold to the government, and Schiller then purchased land for a farm in Illinois, which he went to occupy when he left New Orleans. He is remembered as a quiet, industrious man, and a writer of fair ability. —*New Orleans Picayune*.

A Large Sheep Ranch.

The largest sheep ranch in Texas—and probably the largest in the United States—is what is known as the Charley Callaghan ranch in Encinal county. In a San Antonio letter the writer says that the number of sheep on this ranch must be between 125,000 and 150,000 head. The ranch was founded by Charles Callaghan with nothing, and before he died, he and his partner, Mr. C. M. Macdonnell, of Laredo, had upwards of 75,000 head of sheep and several hundred thousand acres of land. On his death his portion fell to a couple of his nephews, one of whom, Mr. Charles Star, is at present superintendent of the ranch and successfully carrying on the lucrative business begun by his uncle. As an indication of the wool business of Texas, look to the amount of wool shipped. The wool trade of San Antonio has more than doubled itself in the last two years. From a fair calculation it is estimated that the shipments have amounted to 4,000,000 pounds, and there is yet in store about 500,000 pounds, making an aggregate of 4,500,000 pounds of wool handled here the spring season past. Add to that 4,000,000 to be handled, and we have 8,500,000 pounds of wool handled in San Antonio in 1881. Only three or four years ago 1,000,000 pounds of wool was an incomprehensible quantity in the experience of the wool-buyer of San Antonio. What will be the wool-trade of this city a few years hence? The sheep business in Texas is actually only in its infancy. Ten years from now men will laugh at our boast of to-day. San Antonio is not the only wool market, and, in fact, it is not the first, as Corpus Christi takes that rank, and much wool is handled in Austin, Waco, Fort Worth, Abilene and other points in the State. Looking at it in this light, am I not right in saying that wool-growing is one of the most important and rapidly growing industries in Texas, the great Southwestern Empire State of the Union?

A LABORER in Russia gets eight cents a day and "finds himself." Finds himself mighty hungry pretty often, we should think.

TALMAGE says "revolution is just ahead of us." So long as it keeps ahead of us, who cares? Let the revolution revolute!

The Forest Fire.

Prarie Farmer.

The most distressing effects of the prolonged drouth have been the destruction of life and property in the forest fire of Michigan. During the past week a considerable portion of the small peninsula of Michigan, formed by Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay, has been devastated by fire, or rather by a series of fires, whose origin is a matter of surmise, and whose progress was stayed only by the shore of the lake or the want of material on which to feed. The counties visited by dire destruction were those of Saginaw, Tuscola, Sanilac and Huron. All the horrors which human beings can experience or imagine, were attendant on the progress of the fires. The country is densely wooded, embracing a portion of the lumber region, and the settlers had planted themselves upon small clearings where they were hemmed in as completely as if caught in the garret of a house, whose stairways were flooded with smoke and flames. As a consequence, the loss of life has been appalling, between five hundred and a thousand people having been suffocated in deceptive hiding places, or burned to a crisp by the all-devouring element. Poor frightened creatures buried themselves in their gardens, only to be baked; they crawled down into wells, only to be suffocated; they crept into cellars, only to be buried in the mass of charred rubbish piled up by the bosom of destruction that swept over the land.

Fugitives were not safe in the open field where the unimpeded gale hastened the surge of the burning waves upon their faltering retreat; they were not safe in the forest, not knowing which way to turn, and in their blind desperation rushing into the very jaws of the fire; they were not safe in the towns, for upon the dried and cracking roofs balls of fire from the neighboring forests were rained down as if shot from mortars and galling guns. Accompanying, or rather preceding the advance of the fire, there came a darkness exceeding that of the gloomiest night. The cloud that enveloped everything was neither vapor, nor smoke, nor ashes; it was, just darkness, not black but brownish red—the shadow of the death angel's wing preceding the thrust of his fiery dart. The darkness of Egypt could not have been so terrible, because the Egyptian plague was not the advance guard of fire; nor could the gloom enveloping the lake of burning marl be so oppressive, for beneath its shade the fallen angels knew they had reached the end of their downward flight, and were at length at rest, secure from the wrath of an offended God and the pursuing hosts of Michael. This gloom greatly added to the horrors and embarrassments of the situation. Flight was the impulse of all, but the darkness made flight blundering in some cases and impossible in others.

In the darkness and terror families were separated, some members escaping, some perishing; and it will always be a question which were the greater sufferers—those overtaken and overcome by the heat and smoke and dropping by the way in pain and despair, or those who survived only to discover their nearest and dearest ones as charred corpses, victims of the merciless tide of wrathful flame.

It was a holocaust. Next to the preservation of their own lives, settlers in a wild country are most concerned for the safety of their cattle. Indeed, it is not uncommon for people to endanger and lose their lives in attempts to save the dumb creatures, which form the most tangible and availing portion of their earthly possessions, and which, aside from all selfish considerations, occupy a large share of their affections. The perverse stupidity of the domestic animals is well known, and the experience of the Michigan sufferers was no exception to the general rule; many poor people lost their own lives in the vain effort to extricate their cattle and horses from the labyrinth of flames. The carcasses of these animals, now decomposing in the run, add to the discouragements of the situation, for the festering masses will have to be put under ground before the region will again be habitable. Of the condition in which the bodies of the human victims have been found it is best not to speak; it is preferable that a shroud of decent silence should be drawn over them. The fate of such families as perished all together, though terrible, is enviable compared with that of those survivors who lived to find their kindred suffocated in a root-house or roasted in the forest. There is more horror in the contemplation of death by burning than there is in the actual fact. If the body were consumed while the lungs were supplied with cool, pure air, no doubt the pain would be intense, but in most cases of loss of life in a fire, death is caused by suffocation, and is comparatively painless. When the final catastrophe arrives the victim inhales a breath of smoke or heated air, experiencing the sensation of being struck on the head with a soft heavy substance and is stunned into partial insensibility. The next state is that of unconsciousness and painless death.

The condition of the survivors is pitiable. Many are described as having lost all and still in debt for their places. What a barren, cruel mockery the ownership of those places must be now! And yet it is said that in some of the camps of the survivors, much cheerfulness and enterprise prevail. This is another evidence of the elasticity of the American character. And yet these people are destitute and many of them

suffering from hunger. Contributions have been made and supplies forwarded, but, as it seems to us not in proportion to the necessities of the case, certainly not on the scale on which relief was sent to Chicago after the great fire of 1871. On that occasion the quantities of food that poured in before the people could realize that they were hungry, were bewildering, and in many instances as carefully put up as if intended for a select picnic party. The suffering and loss in consequence of the Chicago fire were not a circumstance to the present calamity in Michigan. The destruction of property gave abundant employment in its replacement, and while destitution prevailed to a limited extent, actual want and suffering were eliminated by the spontaneous generosity of the world. But the region just devastated by fire in Michigan, is really more an object and field of charity than Chicago was in the fall of 1871, although the picturesqueness of a large city destroyed in a night gave notification of the occurrence, and made the scourged city the focus of universal attention. If Chicago, after such an experience, does not respond generously to the cry of the Michigan sufferers for aid, she will be unworthy of her fame and ungrateful for the succor so lavishly extended to her people under a similar visitation.

Texas Cattle.

The great drain on the cattle stock of Southwest Texas to furnish cattle for the drive to Kansas and other Northern States is beginning to be felt in the beef markets. The one and two-year-old steers have been gathered so close for a number of years, so few have been left at home, that to-day there is a great shortage in the beef supply. Another year the cities of New Orleans and Havana will have to look elsewhere for their supply of beef.

Those who now own two and three-year-old steers should bear in mind this fact, and hold them for the beef market. They will get a home market for every beef they have and at prices that will pay better than to drive them North. Beeves have brought a good price this year and there has been a good demand; there was no expense account for driving them; the buyers came right to our homes after them, and this demand will increase every year, as the country settles up. The cities of New Orleans and Havana rely for their supply of beef cattle on this country; our home markets are large ones and must get their supply from here.

Southwest Texas is now furnishing one hundred and twenty-five thousand head of beef cattle per annum to these markets but it cannot keep up the supply if the young cattle continue to be sold as close as they have heretofore been. The advance in the price of cattle this year will tempt many stockmen to sell off all their steer cattle; the profit will be divided between this State and Kansas, Colorado, or Nebraska, whereas the whole profit should be kept in this State. The beef supply of the entire grazing regions is short of the demand and will continue to grow shorter year by year as the area of grazing country is reduced by the inroads of farmers. Every year sees the eastern boundary of the stock country pushed farther west, until to-day, like the Indian, the stockman is at the end of the log and can move no farther. The stockman and feeders of the Northwest States have grown rich by buying our cattle and holding them until they were ready for the beef market; their profits have been larger than the profits of the breeders. The range in Southwest Texas is fully as good now as it is in the Northwest, and there is no reason why our stock owners should continue to divide their profits with these other States. Increased railroad facilities will bring buyers here to buy our beeves and enable our stock raisers to secure the profit which has heretofore been made by Northern stockmen.

An examination into the beef supply of each county in Southwest Texas will convince any one that the steer cattle in the country will not furnish more than one-half of the amount of beef needed by the markets which rely on this region for their meat supply. Keep your cattle at home, and rely on it you will have more money than the man who drives his young cattle to Northern markets. The great overstock of cattle which existed a few years ago, is a thing of the past. Southwest Texas is to-day shorter of cattle than Kansas, Colorado, or Nebraska; her range is fresh and as good as any new country, and can support at least five times as many cattle as it is now doing.

Aerial Navigation.

Step by step progress is being made toward the fulfillment of the prediction made for centuries by far-seeing minds, that men would eventually be able to journey through the air as easily and safely as upon the earth. The recent discovery of a portable electric force has awakened renewed interest in the subject, and given aeronauts encouragement to hope they will ere long have their anticipations fully realized. Many of them believe, says the *Liverpool Post*, that if a balloon can carry with it in a portable shape a reserve force such as Sir William Thompson found in the famous box sent him from Paris, balloons can be fitted up with steering apparatus that will enable the aeronaut to control their passage through the air and go whithersoever he will, rather than where the wind listeth. A meeting of the Aeronautical Society is to be held forthwith to discuss this new factor.

Farming in West Texas.

We give our readers the following frank and valuable article on the "great west" taken from the *Callahan Chronicle*:

We have heard considerable complaint because friend George, of the *Stock Journal*, persists in denouncing our country is not at all fitted for agriculture, and it has been said that the press throughout the north-west should cry out against him, but we have thought in silence, that the fact that the *Journal* insisted upon certain things did not change them a particle.

It insists that this is not a farming country at all; but is a stock country exclusively. But we say that he is emphatically mistaken. He bases his reasons upon the fact that in riding over the country he sees crops suffering for rain and which will produce scarcely nothing, all of which we readily admit, and we can take him to Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and numerous other states in the Union at this time and show him field upon field of crops in similar condition; but does this prove that these are not farming states? By no means. We do not believe in misrepresenting a country in order to induce immigration to it, neither do we believe in speaking disparagingly of it in order to promote our self interest. There is reason in all things. We are ready to admit that this as a whole, is not exclusively a farming country, neither is it exclusively a stock country, from the fact that sheep are fast taking the place of cattle. There are thousands of acres in northwest Texas which can never be utilized for ought but stock-raising, and yet there are thousands of acres in northwest Texas which can never be utilized for ought but stock-raising, and yet there are thousands of acres with soil as rich and as well adapted to the production of grain as can be found in the Union, with the advantage in our favor—the lands being cheap. There are farms in Callahan county which have produced splendid crops of wheat this year, upon which the second crop of millet has been cut, where melons grow as if by magic, where good potatoes and other vegetables are raised and this in one of the severest drouthy years.

The heavy cattle owners are moving out, and men who combine a farm with a flock of sheep, some milk cows, a few horses, hogs, etc., are taking their place, and to such the country is particularly adapted and offers an extra inducement; nature will have her way in spite of all we can do or say; we might write volumes and we would not change the adaptability of the land. The lower valleys are better adapted to farming than to grazing; in places where four years ago the mesquite grass was luxuriant and thrifty, it has now given away to weeds from the fact that stock during wet weather tramp it down never to rise again, but to be replaced by a worthless weed; of this fact all our stock men will testify. Then why cannot these valleys be made to produce something to enrich the country instead of lying idle. It will not interfere with stock men in the least. As the *Journal* remarks, the farming out on the frontier has been done in a most primitive manner, not one acre in ten which are being farmed upon are yet under proper or even passable cultivation, and yet we can cite you to men who have been farming here for four years who could sell their farms at handsome profits, but they say this country is good enough for them; they have done well here and here they will remain.

Corn.

The corn crop throughout all portions of Eastern and Northern Mississippi and adjacent parts of Alabama, comprising also an extensive area in north Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, is largely a failure. From every section of that region the reports from local papers tell the same story, and attribute the cause to the unusually hot weather that burned the corn with intense heat waves while no rain fell to give it vitality or strength to resist the excessive and long-continued warmth. But what was death and destruction to corn proved a benefit and vitalizer to cotton. The failure of the corn crop, however, is unfortunately a very serious matter to those planters who made an effort to raise a varied crop. Many of them are greatly disheartened and disgusted to an extent that makes them threaten to never try the experiment again. But those who pursue such a silly course will be vast losers in the future, for it is not probable that such a peculiarly phenomenal season as that of the present year will ever occur again. There are many planters, especially in the prairie country of Mississippi and Alabama, and alluvial bottoms throughout all portions of the South, who have always made all the corn they required for their own use, and their failure this season will not deter those wise persons from trying again. These have proved the value of diversified cropping, and are not apt to give it up in despair because of one failure in an extraordinary season like that of this year. As a great many of the planters in the South have added stock-raising to their list of farm industries, the loss of their corn crop will have a serious effect on that enterprise; but next year holds out hopeful promises, and they will act wisely who act according to their hopes.

A CERTAIN doctor of divinity said every blade of grass was a sermon. The next day he was amusing himself by clipping his lawn, when a parishioner said, "That's right, doctor, cut your sermons short."